

Bob
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I've been sweating blood all the while you've been away--subject, the Middle East. PB meets this morning and imperative you be brought up to date pronto, so here are the bare bones:

a. The PB "discussion" paper on Middle East policy issues that I had a lot to do with drafting, and which you defended so strongly at the PB (e.g. we can't kid ourselves that Arab nationalism is separable from Nasser) stimulated extensive NSC discussion.

JFD said vigorously "we can't compete with USSR for Nasser's favor" (see attached detailed notes which I took for you). Even AWD chimed in, saying Arab unity movement not really very lasting (same thing you complained of re his previous week's briefing). DCI didn't even look at PB paper until Thursday morning just before NSC and then boggled too at "Should we now seek accommodation with Nasser".

b. Upshot of NSC meeting was new draft prepared by Gordon Gray and boys (see 5 August draft attached), which State and I found impossible, no matter how much it reflected views of NSC. We got to take it off last Thursday's NSC agenda and to request an SNIE on consequences of various broad policy alternatives, designed to drive home facts of life to DCI, DDP, NSC.

c. New SNIE (attached) is top notch, really states case (Nasser and Arab nationalism are for all practical purposes inseparable, we cannot appear to support Arab nationalism, if at same time we oppose Nasser, etc.). It goes before IAC today, with advance copies to PB pronto and printed for NSC Thursday. DCI read draft and surprisingly went along, though unenthusiastically.

d. Meanwhile last Saturday and Sunday I ended up drafting new paper for PB (last tab) which marries SNIE with Gordon Gray's draft and produces something at least consistent with the intelligence facts. Someone had to do something, and I was fall guy as the only one who had anything constructive to say at PB (sic). New paper just went through Board Assistants with only Defense splitting and with strong State plaudits (State, up through Rountree, agrees fully with us and is trying frantically to convert JFD, with some prospects for success).

e. Draft before PB today is completely in accord with your thinking as I understood it and hope you'll back it to the hilt. We ought then to make a strong pitch to DCI tomorrow night and get Norm Paul in line (he really buys the ONE view but not all his people do). Above all, if you can't go to PB this morning, urgently request you scan new paper, and give me your O.K.

Rob X.

R. W. KOMER

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